Prabuddha Bharata

No. 41—Vol. IV—DECEMBER 1899

GLIMPSES

ANTHONY sought happiness in love; Brutus in glory; Cæsar in dominion. The first found disgrace, the second disgust, the last ingratitude, and each destruction.—*Colton.*

THE Persian Saint Hathomê, on being asked by a man for some advice on the eve of his departure to another country, said: 'If you want to get a friend, God is sufficient; if you wish to have a companion, the maker of destiny is it; if you are desirous of honour and fame, the world is just the place for it; if you like to have a comforter in times of distress, the scriptures are more than enough for the purpose; if you are in need of work, devotion is just it; if you ask me more, 'keep the remembrance of Death always present in your mind,' is the last that I can offer you.

A MAN enquired with humility of a Sadhu whom he had seen absorbed in deep meditation,—"Of whom have you learnt such a good process of concentration?" "From the cat" was the reply. "When she lies in wait for the rats at the mouth of their hole she is more steady than myself."

ON a certain occasion Sri Ramakrishna in the course of a deeply spiritual conversation with some gentlemen of Calcutta—one among whom was the distinguished Dr. Sircar—turned upon the subject of Jnana Yoga and sought to impress upon them the immense difficulty of attainment and the vast superiority of true wisdom over all book-learning and empty talk. On hearing this Dr. Sircar made the following remarks to Sri Ramakrishna's disciples. "This man (Sri Ramakrishna) could not have attained so much wisdom if he had read books. Faraday communed with nature. He studied nature himself and therefore he succeeded in discovering so many scientific truths. Mathematical formulæ only throw the brain into confusion. They set up tremendous obstacles in the path of original enquiry."

Sri Ramakrishna:— "When, throwing myself prostrate on the bare earth under the grove of the five trees (*Panchabati*) I used to pray to the Mother Divine, I would say to Her, 'Oh Mother! reveal unto me that One Reality which the *karmis* have attained through work, which the *yogis* have seen through communion, and which the *jnanis* have realized through knowledge.' Or how should I express the various ways in which I used to speak to my Mother? Oh that blessed state! (of superconscious realisation). Sleep fled away." So saying the Paramhamsa tried to give verbal expression to that unspeakable state of transcendent bliss by the following song:—

Think ye, I shall sleep any more? Sleep is gone.
I keep the night through work and communion.
Sleep I've sent (S)leep the e'erlasting night.
Sleep of Communion! Mother! at Thy Holy sight.

IMMORTALITY

An address by the Swami Abhedananda at the Thirty-second Annual Meeting of the Free Religious Association, held in Boston, Mass., June 1st and 2nd.

THOSE who have studied the writings of the ancient Aryans, who inhabited India, will remember that the Hindus, the ancient Aryans, of India, were the first nation who understood the conception of immortality, and expressed it more clearly than any of the philosophers, such as Plato and Hegel, who flourished in other countries at other times. Referring to one of the most ancient writings of these Hindu philosophers, in the most poetical of the philosophic treatises which have been handed down to us from prehistoric times,—I mean the *Katha Upanishad* (which has been translated by Sir Edwin Arnold under the title of "The Secret of Death"),—we find it begins with this inquiry :—

"There is this doubt: When a man dies, some say he has gone forever, he is annihilated; but others hold that he still lives;—which of these is true and correct?"

Various answers have been given this question. Metaphysics, philosophy and religion in all countries have endeavored to solve the problem; but at the same time hundreds of thinkers have tried their best to bring forward arguments against the idea that man exists after death,—in other words, against the idea of immortality. In spite of all their attempts the question still arises in our minds, What becomes of man after death? Does he still exist?

From the very ancient times there existed in India a class of thinkers or theorists called Châr vâkas. They believed that the individual soul is the same as the body. When the body dies the soul is also dead and gone. They identified body with soul. Their motto was: "As long as you live, live comfortably. Seek pleasure. If you do not have money, beg or borrow; because after death, when this body will be burned into ashes, nothing will be left which will have to account for your deeds." Such Chârvâkas we find in almost every country and every age. If we study the Old Testament carefully we find that in the ninth chapter of Ecclesiastes, Solomon says: "Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart.....Live joyfully with thy wife whom thou lovest; for there i no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest."

The followers of such Charvákas are spreading very rapidly in every country. They are called by different names today, such as atheists, agnostics, materialists, and so forth. According to these Charvakas, or this class of thinkers, those who believe in a soul after death, or in a life after death, are superstitious fools, while those who follow them in

opposing this idea are clever and intelligent beings. There is no such thing as the soul, most of them hold. No argument can convince them. No argument can make them believe that the soul is separable from the body; because they do not admit the existence of anything which cannot be perceived by the senses. Volumes after volumes have been written against the existence of soul, in order to stop the useless questioning; but, in spite of all their efforts, have they succeeded in stopping that innate question—What remains after death?—which rises spontaneously in almost every human heart? The same question arises to-day, as arose thousands of years ago. Nobody can stop it, because it is inseparably connected with our nature. The same question was asked by sages and sinners, by prophets and priests, by kings and beggars—the same question we are discussing to-day; and it will be discussed in the future. We may forget it for the time being in the turmoils and struggles of our lives; we may not ask it when we are deeply absorbed in comforts and luxuries and sense enjoyments; we may delude ourselves by various false argumentations; but the moment we notice the sudden appearance of death, the moment we see that some of our nearest and dearest ones are going to die, we stop for a while and ask within ourselves, What is this? Where has he gone? Does he still exist? What has become of him? That dormant question re-appears in a new form and disturbs the peace of our mind.

Then we begin to inquire; but at the very threshold of our inquiry we find an adamantine wall which it is almost impossible to break through. Weak intellects stop there; their feeble attempts to cross that wall produce no result. That wall is nothing but the belief that the body is the producer of the soul, that the soul is the result of the physical form we call the "body." Those who can overcome this strong barrier can discover the immortal nature. The old, crude way of inferring existence after death, and a future life for all men, women and children from the tradition of a single miraculous resurrection of a certain person, no longer appeals to our reason. The days of believing blindly in the authority of somebody's sayings are gone by. We want maturer reasoning Those who believe in that miraculous resurrection will perhaps say that those who do not believe in it have no hope. But we do not listen to their remarks now. The time has come when we want to discuss the question scientifically, psychically, philosophically, metaphysically and in all other ways possible.

Now let us see whether the explanation that body is the cause of the soul is satisfactory or not. Taking it for granted that the soul, or the mass of thought, or whatever you may call it, is the outcome of the combinations of matter which make up the body, we ask, What is the cause of that body? What force combines the matter into the form of the body? What force is there which forms your body in one way and my body in another? What is the cause of these distinctions? Some people say that the aggregate of materials which we call the body is the cause of that

force or that power which we call the soul or ego or individual personality But if we ask them, What is the cause of that body which produces the soul? they say, Some other combination of matter. The materialists will perhaps answer that this body has been produced by some other body. But the question remains the same. What is the cause of *that* combination of matter—that, "some other body"? Some other combination of matter,—and so on. Instead of answering the question and explaining the cause of the combination of matter, they say that this combination is the resul of another combination which ultimately leads to the fallacy of *regressus in infinitum*. The method of explaining the soul by the body is like the process of explaining the cause by the effect, which is putting the cart before the horse.

Many people think that our parents have created our soul. But if we study closely our own nature, and the nature of every individual, we find that the parents have no such power. Each individual is bound by the eternal laws of nature. Each individual is free and independent of parents and other environment.

The Hindus believe that each individual soul existed before birth and will exist in future. By individual soul the Hindus mean the *subtle body*. They say that this gross form, which we call the body, is the result of a subtle form which we call the ego. This subtle form consists of mind, the vital powers, intellect, intelligence. The subtle body may be called the germ of life. It is called by some the thought-body, by others the bright-body, the resurrected-body, and so forth. It contains infinite possibilities and potentialities. This subtle body remains after death. All the experiences, impressions, desires, ideas, that are gathered through a gross bndy remain in the form of an invisible bundle of subtle matter and thought force, which manufactures another gross form. This germ of life, after accomplishing certain purposes by assuming one form, gives up the old mantle and invests itself in a new one, being subject to the laws of cause and effect, action and reaction. This subtle body, or germ of life, is the individual ego. It remains after the gross form is dead, and continues evolving and evolving until it manifests perfectly all the latent powers that are coiled up within itself.

(To be continued.)

A WESTERN PHILOSOPHER

THE birth of Stoic Philosophy in Athens dates from some three centuries before the Christian Era. Epicureanism and Pyrrhonism belong to the same period, something like a century after the death of Socrates. The last-named school avowedly owed much to the East, and it is quite possible that all Greek thought at this time was influenced, through Persia, by India. How-

ever that be, after the first outburst of conviction, two more of the noblest voices of Western antiquity were added to the roll of Stoicism.

The earliest teachers were Zeno, Chrysippus, and Cleanthes, and the later, —Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius. Both of these lived the greater part of their lives in Rome, Epictetus as a slave in the time of Nero, Marcus Aurelius as Emperor when the inroads of barbarians were already causing the Empire to totter to its fall.

Both stand out in sharp contrast against those ideas which are known to-day as Hedonistic on the one hand, and Positivist on the other. To both, Socrates was the name of all names and the burden of their message to the world was strength. Epictetus, the Greek slave, was by far the deeper thinker, and had the more spiritual nature of the two, and it is interesting to note at once the similarities and contrasts between the teaching of this European Sage and the great Indian Seers.

1. Even as in a sea-voyage, when the ship is brought to anchor, and you go out to fetch in water, you make a by-work of gathering a few roots and shells by the way, but have need ever to keep your mind fixed on the ship, and constantly to look round, lest at any time the master of the ship call, and you must, if he call, cast away all those things, lest you be treated like the sheep that are bound and thrown into the hold: so it is with human life also. And if there be given wife and children, instead of shells and roots, nothing shall hinder us to take them. But if the master call run to the ship, forsaking all those things and looking not behind. And if thou be in old age, go not far from the ship at any time, lest the master should call, and thou be not ready.

—Epictetus.

2. Which of us will not admire Lycurgus, the Lacedæmonian? For having lost an eye at the hands of one of the citizens, and having received the young man from the people that he should punish him as he would, he refrained from this; but having taught him and proved him to be a good man, he brought him into the theatre. And when the Lacedæmonians marvelled, *I received this man from you*, he said, *insolent and violent*; *I give him back to you mild and civil.*

—Epictetus.

3. If the only Good is that the Will should be as it ought to be, and the only Evil as it ought not, where is there then any place for strife, for reviling? For about what things shall we strive? About those that are nothing to us? And with whom? With the ignorant, the unhappy, with men who are deceived concerning the greatest things?

—Epictetus.

4. The position and token of the vulgar: he looks never to himself for benefit or hurt, but always to outward things. The position and character of the philosopher: he looks for benefit or hurt only to himself.

—Epictetus.

5. Whatever the event may be, it shall lie with thee to use it nobly, and this no man can prevent.

—Epictetus.

6. When it may be needful to share some peril with thy friend or thy country, inquire of no oracle whether thou shouldst do the thing. For if the seer should declare that the sacrifices are inauspicious this signifies clearly either death, or the loss of some limb, or banishment; yet doth Reason decree that even so, thou must stand by thy friend, and share thy country's danger.

—Epictetus.

7. As a mark is not set up to be missed even so the nature of evil exists not in the universe.

—Epictetus.

8. If any one should set your body at the mercy of every passer-by, you would be indignant. When, therefore, you set your own mind at the mercy of every chance, to be troubled and perturbed when any one may revile you, have you no shame of this?

—Epictetus.

9. Man, be mad at last, as the saying is, for peace, for freedom, for magnanimity. Lift up thy head, as one delivered from slavery. Dare to look up to God and say: *Deal with me henceforth as thou wilt; I am of one mind with thee; I am thine, I reject nothing that seems good to thee; lead me whithersoever thou wilt, clothe me in what dress thou wilt. Wilt thou have me govern or live privately or stay at home or go into exile, or be a poor man, or a rich? For all these conditions I will be thy advocate with men, —I show the nature of each of them, what it is.*

Epictetus.

10. I go either to do great deeds myself, or to give another the chance of doing them; though I myself fail, I shall not grudge it to another to do nobly.

(Quoted by Epictetus as the words of Sarpedon, son of Zeus).

HOW LOCHAN SOLVED THE EVIL PROBLEM:

A True Story

"EXAMPLE is better than precept," is an old saying, and nowhere was it more fully appreciated and did interpenetrate the national life than in India. The sages of yore so completely realised its gravity that they divided the life of a man into four stages, each of strict discipline and culture to form the character, the life of intense practicality, which we in these days stand so much in need of. They scarcely preached in eloquent sermons and rhetorics, but by the living example of their life,—a life homely and serene, pure and noble, sympathetic and tolerant, loving and enlightened. They never told men that they were sinners and doomed to eternal damnation if they did not follow what they were taught but had words of love and benediction for all.

The virtuous and the holy indeed dispel the gloom that hangs over the unbalanced spirits of the wicked and the immoral. "The contact even, for a moment,

with the good and the holy forms the boat to cross the ocean of life". Nothing can act upon soul but soul, nothing can overcome wickedness but love and kindness. The frozen snow can only be melted by heat, and the shifting and callous heart can only be made to love and sympathise by the soft and gentle fire of the loving lives of the sincere and the good. The wisdom of the principle of correction by punishment is questionable. The courts of justice often tend to make men more unjust and false than they were before they sought their aid. The penal code cannot better or alter the internal condition of a thief or a scoundrel. On the other hand it is an open question that whether with the increase of complex criminal laws and regulations, the law-breaking instinct in man is more lively or not. Prison walls turn out men all the more furiously determined to lead a vicious life. The rod is no contrast to vice and wickedness. It is always the strong sense of contrast that strikes the inmost chord of the heart, and through its action, is one's own low and miserable moral condition brought home vividly before the mind's eye, and rousing self-indignation and self-reproach, it acts upon the life like a subtle magnetic current turning a sinner into a saint. We will illustrate by a true story how it was that the sinking vessel of life of a wicked person sent adrift by the strong whirlwinds of vice, was safely brought to the shore by the blessed sailoring of a good example.

There is in Bengal a place called Nadia, the celebrity of which has extended throughout the whole literary and religious world, as not only the birth-place of the great teacher of Love, Sri Chaitanya, the light of India, but as the fostering soil of the system of Hindu logic—the Nyaya Philosophy. About ten years after the departure of the great master, there lived a pious man by name Lochan Das, belonging to the Vaisya caste. He had no one in the world except a very devoted wife by whom he had no issue. Trade in conch-shells, was his profession, and handsome was his income from it. Lochan always divided his profit into two equal parts, the one-half he spent in charitable purposes and other good works, and what was saved from the other half, after providing the necessaries of life, he used to lay by for future emergencies. So it was not unknown in the village that he always had some ready-money with him in the house.

When Lochan was living his holy and beautiful life, there happened at a certain time a terrible prevalence of thieves in Nadia. The thieves were so skillful in their work that their operations baffled all vigilance, and to the common people, the whole affair became shrouded in mystery. Hundreds of respectable families were made destitute and a veritable reign of terror prevailed. To save the money that they had from being stolen, Lochan and his wife used to keep watch all the night by turns, putting a feeble lamp under cover of an earthen-jar with a few holes in it, near their bed-side, with the double purpose of using it immediately they wanted it and to keep the room pretty dark to entice the too confident thief or thieves in.

Now, one dark night when the world was living in the sweet lap of slumber, enwrapped in dead silence, which was

being disturbed now and then only by the shrill echoing voices of the crickets, and barking of the dogs, or by the rustle of the leaves and tender branches of the trees moved by the winds, Lochan according to his turn sat still till midnight, and then arousing his wife from sleep to keep watch over the latter half, laid himself down and soon fell fast asleep. After a little while indistinct yet steady strokes were heard on the other side of a wall of the room, and unable to make out what it could be, the lady softly and cautiously awoke her husband, who after a little close attention understood that an aperture was being made in the wall. The devout and stainless Lochan fully realising the whole situation waited for the thief with a heart full of courage and firmness. He asked his wife to sit by the door, with the covered lamp and take away the earthen jar just as the thief should enter the room, while he himself took his position securely enough to prevent the escape of the thief against the side of the would-be opening in the wall As soon as their prey was in, their plan of attack was carried out, and with perfect success. The whole room was suddenly illumined with profuse light, with the miserable thief within who stood aghast, a figure of wood, motionless and speechless, or like a snake, held spell-bound by some powerful mantra. But instead of capturing the thief, what they saw was more than enough to make them overpowered with mixed feelings of surprise and bewilderment, shame, reverence and affection. After a moment's gaze at the face of the thief, Lochan exclaimed with a heart full of astonishment,—"Honoured Brother. What is this? What does this mean? Fie! Fie! What a shame! Son of an illustrious father, born of exalted Brahman family, what led you to take to this abominable life of a thief? Myself being of lower caste, your father demurred to sanctify my house with his holy presence, and you, his son, are here to-night in this disgraceful garb! Oh how regrettable! I am your most humble servant; all that is mine is at your command; why then should you have undergone so much trouble to try to get what could be yours if you only expressed a wish for it? The whole of your body is covered with dust, face wan, torn rags around your waist, why should you have reached this condition? However, it is my extreme good luck that made you bring the dust of your holy feet to my house, so come and wash. You must be very hungry; might I venture to ask you to have a lunch of sweets and fruits that I have got in the house?" So saying Lochan asked his wife to spread a cushion on the ground and fetch some water.

Lochan's heart was not unknown to the "Honoured Brother." This unfeigned and sterling goodness of Lochan caused his higher nature to open, and for a while he lost himself in the grandeur and beauty of the life before him, which was potent enough to breathe purity and goodwill, disinfect and sanctify the foul and the unhealthy atmosphere which surrounded his mind. Repentance consumed his heart through and through, which was perhaps only slightly cooled by the outflow of tears from his eyes. The good wife of Lochan asked him to eat something, but how could he? He refused. But Lochan won him round by threatening that he would call

the neighbours if he would not. The "Honoured Brother" began to eat as one possessed, and succeeded after a great struggle in swallowing a few mouthfuls. After a while Lochan said, "Let us build up the aperture in the wall now, otherwise there may be a great disturbance in the morning." Lochan prepared the mortar, his wife helped with water and the "Honoured Brother" built up the hole. So it was done in a short time. Then Lochan placing ten gold *mohurs* and one silk cloth at the feet of the "Honoured Brother," said, "Please accept this small gift of mine, and henceforth let your servant know when you want anything, and he will be ever glad to obey your commands. Never again do such a vile and detestable deed." Up to this moment the "Honoured Brother" did not utter a word but now unable to subdue his feelings any longer exclaimed in a husky voice, "Brother, I shall not take anything more; I will never steal anymore. Having seen with the eye divine the blessed goodness of your heart, these worthless material treasures have no more charm for me! To-morrow no one shall see Raghunath in Nadia or inBengal; I am the worst of men. I never had the opportunity of being in good company, or the inclination to hear good precepts. My father was a celebrated teacher and born of him, what have I not done?—theft, murder, adultery, treachery, and oppression of the good and the innocent! Now, by your grace, I am brought to my senses; let me bid farewell to you." So saying he embraced Lochan warmly and left the place.

A short sketch of the "Honoured Brother" is necessary here. His name was Raghunath Bhattacharya. He was the only son of Devi Saran Tarkalankar, the greatest of all the Naiyaiks of his time. In his boyhood he was very negligent in his studies; in his youth there were indeed very few crimes that he had not commited, goaded by the powerful spur of the senses to the dark path of sin. A few years after the death of his father, the patrimony was all squandered away in the gratification of wanton and sensual desires, and theft became the means of his maintenance. He grew so much skilled in that art, that the whole of Nadia was once threatened with a reign of terror by the ravages of this single man.

The next day Raghunath could not be found anywhere and no one knew where he had gone. After many years he came back to Nadia—not human any more, but divine,—one of the greatest of the devotees of God, known throughout India as Sreemat Raghunath Goswami.

The great-souled Lochan, just after the renunciation of Raghunath, sold up all that he had and gave away all his money to the poor and the needy, living a contented life of voluntary poverty and devotion, with his good and helpful wife.

VIRAJANANDA.

Reason rules the world and man until it comes to the limit of its jurisdiction, when it is compelled to bow before a power that transcends and fulfils it—LOVE. Law is just, but it cannot free man from its stern decrees. Love only accomplishes that; "Love is the fulfilling of the Law." Faith is the greater Reason that reveals to man the power of Love, of Truth, of God—to free him from bondage "under the law." *J. G. Stevenson.*

VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY AT GREENACRE

THE Greenacre Conferences were started by Miss Farmer in 1894, the year after the Parliament of Religions was held at Chicago. Since the time of their inauguration, the liberalizing and unsectarian spiritual teachings of the Vedanta philosophy have taken a prominent part in shaping the ideals of the Greenacre movement. The teachers of this philosophy have come from India, and have represented it almost every year. These teachers are known as "Swamis," a word meaning spiritual teachers, or masters. Of these, the first was Swami Vivekananda, the Hindu *Sannyasin*, or monk, who represented the Hindu philosophy before the World's Fair Parliament of Religions. He was the first Hindu teacher who came to America and explained the lofty ideals of the Vedanta through his wonderful eloquence, oratorical powers, and magnetic personality.

In 1896, his successor, Swami Saradananda, came to Greenacre and taught Vedanta for two successive seasons. By his charming manners and unselfish love for humanity he succeeded in making a deep impression, as to the practical results of Vedanta teachings, upon the minds of almost all who met him personally or heard his discourses under the "Swamis' Pine" in the woods.

In 1898, Swami Saradananda, was followed at Greenacre by the writer of the present article. During that season he gave one lecture on "Science and Religion," in the large tent before the general audience, and four lectures before the Monsalvat School of Comparative Religion, established and conducted at Greenacre by Dr. Lewis G. Janes. On account of the pressure of work at different cities this season, the present Swami could give only three lectures—in the last week of August. The subjects were "Is Hinduism Pantheistic?" "Reincarnation," and "The Spiritual Influence of India in the West."

It is necessary to mention some of the fundamental principles of the Vedanta philosophy, so that the reader may be able to learn a little of what this ancient philosophy of the Hindus teaches. The word *Vedanta* means literally "end of all wisdom," and this philosophy teaches what that end of wisdom is and how it can be attained. Some people may misunderstand the meaning of the above phrase, and may think that, like all sectarian philosophies, it limits the scope of human knowledge by asserting that there is an "*end*," and that no one can go beyond it. This philosophy never means that; it tells us rather to realize the eternal *Truth* of the universe and to become one therewith. It teaches that revelation is not given once and then left to stand for all time, but that it wells eternally in the heart of man, being ever

from *within*, never from without. It teaches that science, philosophy, and logic must not be separated from religion; that that which is unscientific, unphilosophic, or illogical cannot be truly religious.

Vedanta says that religion does not mean a belief in this creed or that dogma, in this book or that person, but that it is the *science of the soul*. It gives a scientific and philosophic basis to religion. It teaches that every soul is divine and a child of immortal bliss; that we must become conscious of our divine nature and become perfect in this life, manifesting divinity in and through all the actions of our every-day life. It points out the various methods by which we can unfold our higher nature and mold our conduct of life in the highest form. It teaches the secret of *work*, the secret of *devotion*, the secret of *concentration* and *meditation*, as well as the secret of the *highest wisdom*. The Vedanta philosophy explains the purpose of life and how it can be fulfilled. It is based upon the doctrine of evolution and teaches that through the natural process of evolution, each soul is bound to attain to the highest stage of spiritual development, and become perfect sooner or later. It recognizes the different stages of the spiritual evolution of the individual soul as spiritual childhood, youth, and maturity, and explains scientifically the immortality of the individual soul. It teaches that the soul of man existed in the past, exists in the present, and will exist in the future continuing to exist after death, manifesting again according to its desire, tendency, and powers, either on this earth or on some other planet. The Vedanta holds that our present is the resultant of our past, and that our future will be the result of our present. It maintains that we ourselves are responsible for all the pleasure and pain, happiness and misery, of our present life; that we make our own destiny and shape our future by our thoughts and deeds. It teaches that we are at present bound by the law of action and reaction—of cause and sequence. The Vedanta says that God does not reward the virtuous, nor does he punish the wicked; but that reward and punishment are the reactions of our own actions.

This philosophy has three grand divisions: first, the Dualistic; second, the Qualified non-dualistic; and third, the Nondualistic. By these three it includes within its all-embracing arms the various systems of religion that exist in the world, together with all their creeds, sects, and denominations. It has no quarrel with any system of philosophy or religion. It believes in an intracosmic, eternal Being, who is personal as well as impersonal. The *personal* aspect of that Being is called "Iswara," the Creator *(i. e., Projector)* of the universe, who is worshiped by all nations under different names; by some as a Father in Heaven; by others as Divine Mother; by some as God; by others as Jehovah, Allah, Brahma, Hari, Buddha, or Lord. The *impersonal* aspect is called "Brahman" by the Hindus, "Will" by Schopenhauer, "The Unknown and Unknowable" by Herbert Spencer, "Substantia" by Spinoza, "The Good" by Plato, and "The Absolute" and "The Noumenon" by others.

Vedanta is not pessimistic, like Buddhism. It does not teach that the whole visible universe is an illusion, as some people misunderstand the spirit of this philosophy, through not knowing the real meaning of the word *Maya*. Its true meaning is *relative*, *conditional*, or *phenomenal existence*, and not "illusion." Professor Max Müller understood this when he said:

"For all practical purposes, the Vedantist would hold that the whole phenomenal world, both in its subjective and objective character, should be accepted as *real*. It is as real as anything can be to the ordinary mind. It is not mere emptiness, as the Buddhists maintain. And thus the Vedanta philosophy leaves to every man a wide sphere of real usefulness and places him under a law as strict and binding as anything can be in this transitory life. It leaves him a Deity to worship as omnipotent and majestic as the deities of any other religion. It has room for almost every religion—nay, it embraces them all."

The Vedanta philosophy does not recognize caste, creed, or sex in the Soul of man. It teaches the equality and sameness of the true nature of all human beings. The one peculiarity of the teachings of Vedanta lies in their universal toleration for, active cooperation with, and acceptance of all the various phases of religious thought in the world. It says that there is one universal Religion in the world, which cannot be confined by any name or authority—nor by any personality or book. Christianity, Judaism, Mohammedanism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Jainism, Hinduism, and all other "isms" are but partial expressions of that underlying, universal Religion. It teaches that all such "isms" are but so many paths leading to the same Goal. It says: "As rivers rising from different mountains run, crooked or straight, toward one ocean, so all these various creeds, sects, and religions, starting from different points of view, run crooked or straight toward one Infinite Ocean of Truth, which we call 'God.'"

The Vedanta philosophy is not confined to any particular book or scripture—it embraces all the Scriptures of the world. It is not built around any particular person, or special revelation. Its ethics includes all the ethical laws discovered by all the great prophets and religious teachers of the World—Christ, Confucius, Zoroaster, Buddha, and others. Moreover, it gives a rational explanation of the moral or ethical nature of man, as distinguished from his true spiritual nature, and it explains the moral and spiritual laws that govern the destiny of each individual soul.—*The Swami Abhedananda in Mind.*

"I look for ultimate unity, not from the world's coming round to me while I stand still, but from a converging movement of thought, affecting all faithful men, toward a centre of repose as yet invisible." James Martineau, Such a movement is the Greenacre Lectureship, established in 1894, on the banks of the Piscataqua, in Maine, with the express purpose of bringing together all who are looking earnestly toward the new day which is surely breaking over the entire world, and who are ready to contribute their best thought, serve and be served. The two months spent there in camp, at the Inn, or at some farmhouse near by, have been the turning point in life for many people, and many return year after year because of the great help they receive in daily living. It seems like home to them. It is easy to be good while there, for the atmosphere is wonderfully inspiring."—Horatio W. Dresser.

THE CASTE SYSTEM

I

WE have been favoured with a paper by Mr. G. R. Vaidya, F. T. S., of Wai, Satara, in reply to the "question quoted on page 160 of No. 102 of *Prasnottara* which runs as follows :—

'Does Jiva (Jâti?) or birth from or in a particular family make a man Brahman'?"

"The answer given to this question in your journal (Prasnottara) is in the negative and the passages quoted in support of the view are altogether, I submit, misleading," says Mr. Vaidya and accordingly goes on to examine the subject and informs us with his decision, in a pamphlet of 42 pages, which, however, could be learnt at once from the name by which he has called it, "Does ever caste depend upon tendencies?—Never." Further he says he has based his reply on the "Divineship of the Caste System," a lecture in Mahratti delivered by Mr. K. V. Lele, F. T. S., "before the Bombay public under the auspices of the Brahman Sabha."

We have not seen this lecture, and we do not identify ourselves with any side of the controversy. But from what we have seen of Mr. Vaidya's arguments based upon passages from the Sastras quoted by him, we are forced to say he has failed to establish his contention. After a lot of beating about the bush, he has been able to quote only one passage from a Purana—the Suta Samhita, bearing directly on the question under review and rendering him a decisive support. The passage is this :—

सर्वेषां जन्मना जातिर्नान्यथा कर्मकोटिभिः।
पञ्चादीनां यथा जातिर्जन्मनैव न चान्यथा॥

"The caste of all depends upon birth, not upon crores of Karma, as the caste (species) of animals depends upon birth and not otherwise."

We have not got the context from whence this sloka has been quoted, so we cannot say what circumstances called forth the expression of this rather queer opinion. Any way, if the decision of the question solely depended upon the numerical strength of quotations from the Sastras, an equal number of them at least, if not more, could be adduced in favour of the assertion that caste is essentially a matter of innate tendency and not of birth exclusively. The following slokas with their English rendering quoted from Prasnottara will serve as specimens :—

"न विप्रेणोऽस्ति वर्णानां सर्वं ब्राह्ममिदं जगत्।
ब्रह्मणा पूर्वसृष्टं हि कर्मणा वर्णतां गतं॥
शूद्रो ब्राह्मणतामेति ब्राह्मणश्चेति शूद्रताम्।
क्षत्रियाज्जातमेवन्तु विद्याद्वैश्यात्तथैव च॥
—Manu.

There is no distinction of castes, the whole universe is the progeny of Brahma, for all men were created equal in the beginning; by actions (karmas) they acquired various castes. A Sudra may become a Brahmana, and a born Brahmana may be degraded to the rank of a Sudra, so also one born a Kshatriya or a Vaishya.

सत्यं दानं क्षमा शीलमनृशंस्यं तपो घृणा।
दृश्यन्ते यत्र नागेन्द्र स ब्राह्मण इति स्मृतः॥
शूद्रे तु यद्भवेल्लक्ष्यं द्विजे तच्च न विद्यते।
वै शूद्रो भवेच्छूद्रो ब्राह्मणो न च ब्राह्मणः॥
यत्रैतत् लक्ष्यते सर्पं वृत्तं स ब्राह्मण स्मृतः।
यत्रैतत् भवेत् सर्पं तं शूद्रमिति निर्दिशेत्॥

'Truth, alms-giving, forgiveness, good conduct, want of cruelty, austerities and mercy; wherever these are to be found, he is a Brahman, King of the Nagas, for this is the law.

If these attributes are seen in a (born) Sudra and are not found in a (born) Brahman then that Sudra is not a Sudra, nor is that Brahman a Brahman.

O Serpent, wherever these qualities are to he found, the law declares him to be a Brahman and wherever these qualities are not found, he, O Serpent, should be regarded as Sudra."

Mr. Vaidya has taken great pains to explain the passage in the Gita चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुणकर्मविभागशः; but so long as he cannot make it mean that the Lord means to convey by it that the son of a Brahmana is a Brahmana, his contention has no legs to stand upon. The Lord states in the first half of the Sloka that he is the author of the caste system, which responsibility however he virtually shakes off in the second. But even allowing that he is the author of the caste system, does it follow that birth determines caste? We do not mean by this that we want to gainsay the fact that birth determines caste; all that we mean to say is that this does not follow from Sri Krishna's statement that "the fourfold caste was created by Me by the different distribution of energies and actions." All that can be understood from this passage is that certain energies and actions make certain castes and that the assigning of particular energies and actions to specific castes have been done by the Lord. And if any corollary can be drawn from this statement, it is this, that certain energies and actions are inherent and innate in each caste, so that the only proof that a man belongs to a particular caste is that he possesses those energies and actions that have been declared peculiar to the caste.

The *innateness* in one of certain energies and actions alone qualifies one to belong to a certain caste. This is very clearly stated in Gita XVIII, 41—44, which we are sorry to see Mr. Vaidya has mistranslated. We shall not accuse him of that time-honoured and ever-interesting operation of text-torturing though the way he has translated the Slokas falls in with the view which he contends for. स्वभाव प्रभवैर्गुणैः he renders "qualities which (Brahmans, etc.) are expected to attain." Then again ब्रह्मकर्मस्वभावजम् etc., he translates "are assigned as the proper qualities for the Brahmans." This rendering of course supports his contention that "Sri Krishna never meant that tendencies obtaining in man should decide his caste," but that birth is the sole arbiter in this question; so that if a man is born of Brahman parents but possesses Sudra tendencies, his duty should be to avoid those tendencies and cultivate those others proper to the caste in which he has happened to take birth. Unfortunately the passages do not lend themselves to this meaning. स्वभाव प्रभवैः means "born of nature," natural, innate; so also does स्वभावजम्। Thus it is clear that so far as Gita has anything to say to it the view that caste should be determined by innate tendencies, and not by birth alone, holds good.

It is a great pity that a momentous subject like the caste-system should be dealt with, even at the present day, from a view-point so narrow and so dogmatical, as has been done in the pamphlet before us. It is a unique and pre-eminently Indian *social* institution—for the Spirit or Atman has no caste—a statement which we are sure even Mr. Vaidya would not gainsay—and one the educational and economical value of which cannot be over-rated. In fact it is our belief that the Labour Problem of the West which is the peculiar outcome of modern European civiliza-

tion and a standing menace to it, would have been nowhere, if some such institution as the Indian Caste System existed there; and to us the rise and growth of 'Socialistic' and other kindred movements all over the West, point to the day in the distant future when some such institution will be evolved out of all these conflicting forces for a peaceful solution of the Labour Problem—if it be solved peacefully at all. But we are digressing from our subject. We were going to observe that a subject like this, to be at all interesting and satisfactory, should not and could not be dealt with but upon broad and general principles, whence no thoughtful men and women would find themselves compelled to turn away at the very outset.

If the Caste System is a Natural Law, (that is, made by the Lord) we ought to find it in every human society. The functions of the priest, warrior, finder of food and clothing, and the hewer of wood and drawer of water are vital necessities for all human societies, and even where they are not visible developed fully their unmistakable germs are never found wanting.

But while the four broad divisions of labour which form the backbone of the Caste System are found, whether or not fully recognised, in every human society, as a Natural Law, caste (or profession) by birth is found to obtain nowhere but in India. Evidently therefore we cannot reasonably hold it to be a Natural Law, or which is the same thing 'made by the Lord.'

Here it could very pertinently be observed that if the Caste System is any good at all and worth preserving, birth seems to be the only stable basis on which it could be worked. Any other method of determination and assignment of caste is sure to be open to various insurmountable objections; for instance, 'qualities' would be always difficult to judge, and to draw the demarcation line between two different castes with their help, would be well-nigh impracticable. Caste by "wealth" is abominable, and there is hardly any other criterion which can afford a working basis.

We shall return to this question in a future issue.

TWENTIETH CENTURY.

SOME NEEDS OF HINDUISM

A SUGGESTION

I HAVE read the suggestions preferred by Mr. R. Atamuthoo Iyengar about opening a pamphleteering business and sending out paid missionaries all over the world to preach the doctrines of Vedanta, and also that by "Twentieth Century" which appeared in the columns of your paper some time ago. I have some humble suggestions to make on same subject, which I send to you for publication.

Mr. Iyenger has considered fully the difficulties that lie in the way of carrying out his grand scheme, which depends solely upon money for realisation. His suggestions are, no doubt, wise and thoughtful. But, I am forced to observe at the outset, that the world is too worldly to help us through it by voluntary contributions. Moreover, it is always to be remembered that spirituality is not to be daunted of its aims and ends by financial difficulties, for it has always grown out of poverty to deluge the world with its ambrosial waters. So I ask your readers to consider

the question from a new point of view which is as follows :—

It cannot be too strongly impressed upon the minds of your readers, that they owe a kind of spiritual duty to their fellow-countrymen. No educated man can reasonably question it. *They can explain to others what they read in your paper.* "Eloquence," says Seneca, "is the expression of thought, intensely felt at heart." To begin with, I ask *each* one of your readers to think deeply upon such subjects as they have a liking for. It is a fact in nature, that the most favorite subject is the most intensely thought upon, and it is intensity of thought which gives eloquence. But this your readers should do only to fulfill a solemn duty and not to make any earnings. Spirituality means, on the contrary, selflessness. But if it is looked upon as a sort of profession it is sure to take a very degraded form. I am convinced of this, and I understand from my venerable Gurus, that what is done for money is not the result of selflessness and is quite against the spirit of spirituality. It is in fact, a kind of shop-keeping. I am always reminded by my Gurus that disinterestedness is the essence of spirituality and produces wonderful results by giving us the power of penetrating deep into human nature and exercising an irresistible influence over it. So they always say "Act, think, write and work *disinterestedly:* and you would do much more than what is done by professional workers." Knowing this secret of work, our ancient Rishis never thought of making a profession of religious preaching, like the Missionaries of the West. The duty of the clergy, clipped of its professional elements, was done in times gone by, by the Brahmans who thought Spirituality, breathed Spirituality and worked Spirituality, wherever they went. Revive that kind of disinterested working spirit in India. Revive that selfless work in the cause of spirituality. Let every educated reader of the Prabuddha Bharata, and the Brahmavadin, think deeply upon the subjects discussed in their pages; let them feel intensely the spirit of what they read and express the same to the ignorant masses. They should read the lectures of Swami Vivekananda and think upon the serious questions discussed in them. They would do well to take up, every Sunday, one of the subjects of Swamiji's lectures and try to impress the salient points of the same, upon the minds of the audience in the holy atmosphere of temples. This will require no funds and will be in accordance with the teachings of the Gurus. This is, in fact, the way in which we should work. This requires only a little earnestness and strong will on the part of the readers of Awakened India. I appeal, to the *awakened readers* of the "Awakened India" to *awaken* in this way, the masses to the *awakend state* of the now sleeping, maya-engrossed Soul.

तदुदग्निं विषयक:।

NĀNĀ KATHA

The discovery of what is true and the practice of what is good are the two most important objects of philosophy —*Voltaire.*

When you have chosen your part abide by it, and do not weakly try to reconcile yourself with the world.—*Emerson.*

The essence of knowledge is having it, to apply it; not having it, to confess your ignorance.—*Confucius.*